

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WEST BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WEST BLOOMFIELD
TOWNSHIP BOARD ROOM
4550 WALNUT LAKE ROAD**

Monday, October 29, 2007 @ 3:00 P.M.

Members present: Trustee Robert Spector
Trustee Robert Sher

Members absent: Trustee Deborah Macon

Staff present: Kent Herbert, HR Director

Others present: None

General public: Lisa Hobart, Assessing Director
Marshall Labadie, Environmental Director
Steve Brideau, Finance Director
Ed Haapala, Water & Sewer Director
Chief Ron Cronin, Police Department
Marilyn Henry, Elections Specialist

CALL TO ORDER Chairman Spector called the meeting to order at 3:13 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved as amended with the addition of Amendments to the Employee Manual and correction to the meeting date.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES The minutes of 10/01/07 were approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF NEXT MEETING

No meeting was scheduled.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Recommendation on Fire Chief’s DROP Proposal

Mr. Herbert stated that at the last meeting the Township Attorney presented a recommendation against the DROP Proposal. If a DROP Proposal were granted for the Fire Chief, precedence would be set and it would have to be considered for the Fire Unit, Police Chief, and the Police Unit. Therefore, he recommended that the Committee accept the Township Attorney recommendation.

Motion by Mr. Spector and supported by Mr. Sher to delete the Recommendation of the Fire Chief’s DROP Proposal from the agenda.

**Ayes: Sher, Spector
Nays: None
Absent: Macon
Motion carried**

Appraiser 3-Specialist Job Description

Mr. Herbert stated that staffing changes were presented at the last meeting. Originally, the proposal was to add another Appraiser 3 position to the complement. After further consideration, it was recognized that there were special tasks and responsibilities related to this position.

Mr. Spector asked if this was a continuation of the discussion at the last meeting. Ms. Hobart replied, “Yes” and indicated that it is a replacement of the Appraiser 3 position. She stated that the proposed position is an Appraiser 3 Specialist. Mr. Spector asked if the position would be filled. Ms. Hobart stated the applicant was currently scheduled for the required physical. Mr. Herbert stated the position was temporarily created as approved by the Township Board and requires approval of the new title by the Committee.

Ms. Hobart stated the new title identifies a position that will deal with appraisal tasks as well as attributes specific to database management. She understood there were objections to the position and indicated that the current appraisers were extremely talented and skilled at the most complex residential properties that exist in the State of Michigan.

Ms. Hobart stated the individual being hired for the Appraisal 3 Specialist position has dedicated many years to a management information system as it relates to assessment data. The individual submitted reports of sample database that could be utilized in the Township. She added that currently the Township is utilizing 20 to 25 percent of the capacity of the BS&A software.

Appraiser 3-Specialist Job Description (Continued)

Mr. Sher asked for the difference between the original proposal and the current proposal. Ms. Hobart stated the word Specialist and the duties were different. The primary differences were listed under the Control and Technical areas. It incorporated much of the same tasks related to analyzing, calculating, verifying, and preparing appraisals with emphasis on the database management. For example, the individual would still be a Level 3 Appraiser measuring and listing properties, but would also perform specific duties related to BS&A assessment database information. The individual will be very instrumental in developing queries related to individual homes.

Mr. Sher asked if approval from the Township Board was necessary. Mr. Herbert replied, "Yes." He stated there has been discussion related to tying the information in with the Township GIS and added that the position includes technical duties beyond what is expected of most appraisers. An extensive amount of education would be necessary for a current staff member to perform the duties of the level.

Ms. Henry commented that at the last meeting there was a recommendation for all Level 3 Appraisers and the Union agreed to the increases as well as a change to the contract. However, there was concern with the seniority of the current Level 3 Appraisers. Mr. Sher asked if she agreed with the proposal. Ms. Henry replied, "No" and indicated that was the position of the union.

Mr. Herbert stated that a Letter of Understanding could be created to be signed by all parties to address the seniority issue, in the event there was a reduction of staff in the future.

Mr. Sher stated it appeared that the current Level 3 Appraisers were not qualified to be an Appraiser 3 Specialist. Ms. Hobart stated there was a wide variety of skill sets with Level 3 Appraisers. While the current Level 3 Appraisers may not have skills in this particular database management, there are tasks which the Appraiser 3 Specialist may not be able to perform. Therefore, it is a wide-based spread of responsibilities for a Level 3 Appraiser and she was hoping to be able to distinguish those skills.

There was discussion regarding layoffs, a reduction in State funding, and the impact to the positions. Ms. Hobart commented that the Assessing Department could make a compelling case for the amount of revenue and cost benefit for having Level 3 Appraisers on board. The responsibilities that have been legislatively shifted to the Assessing Department have been enormous and they spend a considerable amount of time handling those responsibilities. She added that while Oakland County is projecting a 1% taxable value increase, she was projecting a 2.5% increase for 2009.

Mr. Spector expressed concern with a Letter of Understanding and asked whether it could be cancelled once it was in place. Mr. Herbert stated that the LOU could not be cancelled until 12/31/08 when the current union contract expired. Mr. Sher stated it appeared that every time the Township makes a change, there is a union issue.

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Appraiser 3-Specialist Job Description (Continued)

Ms. Henry stated the union was simply requesting that the position not be titled "Appraiser 3 Specialist" but rather, a Level 3 Appraiser, which was approved at the last Township Board meeting. If that were done, there would be no distinction for future seniority.

Mr. Spector stated that a specialist position was created for the Development Services Department and the union did not raise an issue then. However, the union is now raising an issue with this particular request.

Ms. Henry stated the LOU which was created for the Development Services Department retained the seniority of all the employees in the clerical positions.

Mr. Herbert further explained the situation which occurred in the Development Services Department with respect to the Senior Clerks and Senior Development Services Clerks. If he thought the union was making an unreasonable request, he would be the first to indicate so. However, he felt that the Township should not create policies that result in a negative impact to seniority employees in the event of a staff reduction.

Mr. Sher stated it has been indicated that it would be helpful in union relations to not have policies that negatively impact union employees with seniority and asked whether the union reciprocated that. Mr. Herbert stated there were some instances which he did not feel that was the case.

Mr. Sher asked if the LOU would restrict the operations of the Assessing Department. Ms. Hobart stated that she did not see the LOU impeding the ability of the team to move forward.

Mr. Sher stated that he was willing to go with Mr. Herbert's recommendation; he was simply indicating that every time he came to a meeting, the union has issues with what is being presented. Mr. Herbert stated the union was being an obstructionist during the reorganization of the Development Services Department. However, things worked out after further discussions and the result was that all the Senior Clerks would be in one classification at the end of 2007. He reiterated that if the union was being unreasonable, he would say so. In this particular case, he felt the union request was fair and reasonable.

Motion by Mr. Sher and supported by Mr. Spector to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Appraiser 3 Specialist job description and that a Letter of Understanding be signed by the Township and Union to address the seniority issue.

Ayes: Sher, Spector

Nays: None

Absent: Macon

Motion carried

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Job Title-Development Director

Mr. Herbert stated this item was discussed at the last meeting. If this position were to be approved, the Planning Director would not report to the Development Services Director. He deferred to Mr. Labadie to explain the reason for the title change.

Mr. Labadie stated that since the redevelopment, he assumed the responsibilities of the Engineering Department along with the Environmental Department. Since the reorganization of the department, there was conversation regarding interest in continuing with the redevelopment. Therefore, he was continuing to do those items under the auspices of the Environmental Director and he was not comfortable in doing that for the long-term. If it was the intention of the Township Board to have him run the operations of the Engineering and Environmental Departments as well as continue to lead the Development Services reorganization, he felt a title change was necessary to reflect those responsibilities.

Mr. Spector stated this issue was already discussed. Mr. Labadie stated the prior conversation was relative to the title of Environmental/Environmental Director and concerns were expressed regarding that title at the last meeting. The alternative name is now Development Services Director, which is more generic.

Mr. Herbert stated another concern was with respect to the Senior Clerks and Senior Development Clerks reporting to the Office Manager. With the current situation, only the Senior Development Clerks report to the Office Manager and the Senior Clerks report to their respective Department Heads. This situation has created some confusion and dissension. Therefore, the idea is to place all the clerks under the Development Services Director so as to create one line of authority.

Motion by Mr. Sher and supported by Mr. Spector to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Development Services Director job description which includes authority over the Engineering and Environmental Departments as well as the clerical pool.

Ayes: Sher, Spector

Nays: None

Absent: Macon

Motion carried

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NEW BUSINESS

Re-Org proposal for Water and Sewer

Mr. Haapala stated he was asking for approval to eliminate the two positions of Water & Sewer Foreman which are currently paid at level 6 and to simultaneously post the positions of Water & Sewer Inspector and Water & Sewer Field Supervisor. The Water & Sewer Inspector position is at pay grade level 6 and will work out of the Code Enforcement Department as a Code Enforcement Officer with water and sewer duties given as directed by the Water & Sewer Director. The Water & Sewer Field Supervisor position is at pay grade level 6 and will be responsible for water and sewer responsibilities at the Water & Sewer Department.

Mr. Sher asked who the Water & Sewer Inspector will report to. Mr. Haapala stated that individual will report to the Code Enforcement Director; however, the salary would be paid out of the Water & Sewer budget.

Mr. Spector asked if the Water & Sewer Inspector would only be handling issues related to water and sewer. Mr. Haapala stated that was correct. He had discussion with Mr. Killian and since there is a tremendous amount of workload in the Code Enforcement Department, they are having difficulty staying on top of the meter by-pass system, cross connection program, and the commercial grease trap inspections, which are detrimental to the Township sewer system. Therefore, this change would dedicate an individual to those issues. He added that the Water & Sewer Department currently pays approximately \$1 million per year in administrative fees to Town Hall.

Mr. Spector stated the request appeared to be the elimination of two Water & Sewer Foreman positions at pay grade level 6 and the creation of two different positions. One position will be placed in the Code Enforcement Department. The other position will remain at the Water & Sewer Department which will include an increase of a half level. Mr. Haapala stated that was correct and added that there were discussions in the past regarding the total elimination of a Water & Sewer Foreman in the future. This request allows for the opportunity of not having to eliminate an individual or throw out an individual who has less seniority.

Mr. Haapala stated the request also includes a Water & Sewer Superintendent at pay grade level 7. Mr. Spector asked if this was a newly created position. Mr. Haapala stated it was dependent upon the acceptance of an offer to a Water & Sewer Specialist at pay grade level 5.5. Mr. Spector asked if he was indicating that he wished to promote an individual currently on staff. Mr. Haapala stated that the individual is qualified to fill the position.

Mr. Spector asked if the Water & Sewer Superintendent would assume the responsibilities of Water & Sewer Director in the event of absence, illness, etc. Mr. Haapala replied, "Yes."

Mr. Haapala stated he was also proposing a modification to the existing Assistant Water & Sewer Director's job description.

Re-Org proposal for Water and Sewer (Continued)

Mr. Spector asked for clarification of the responsibilities of the Water & Sewer Superintendent and Assistant Water & Sewer Director positions. Mr. Haapala stated the Water & Sewer Superintendent will be responsible for running the operations. The Assistant Water & Sewer Director is an administrative position and will not be involved in running the operations.

Mr. Sher stated the proposal involved the elimination of one position at pay grade level 4, two positions at pay grade level 6, the creation of three new positions, and modification of an existing position. Mr. Haapala stated that was correct with the exception of the level 4 position, that position would not be eliminated until 12/31/08.

Mr. Sher asked for a before and after organizational chart. Mr. Haapala stated the charts were included in the packet.

Mr. Herbert stated he was actually eliminating three positions since the Water & Sewer Specialist position is included. Mr. Haapala stated he was not able to state that at this point because interviews have not been conducted yet nor has the individual been offered the position.

Mr. Sher asked if the positions would be posted in house as well as outside. Mr. Haapala stated that was correct. Mr. Herbert stated the positions would only be posted outside if there are no qualified individuals in house.

Mr. Spector stated he was creating positions that could basically be filled by employees currently on staff. Mr. Haapala stated that was correct.

Mr. Sher referred to the organizational chart and asked who reported to the Water & Sewer Superintendent. Mr. Haapala stated the Water & Sewer Field Supervisor would report to the Superintendent. Mr. Sher asked who the Water & Sewer Inspector would report to. Mr. Haapala stated that individual would report to the Code Enforcement Director. Mr. Sher asked who would conduct the performance evaluations of the Water & Sewer Inspector. Mr. Haapala replied, "The Code Enforcement Director" and indicated that he currently did the evaluations for the individual handling the duties on a part-time basis.

Mr. Spector asked about the Billing Department. Mr. Haapala stated there have been several discussions on that issue and the decision is to leave it as is. Therefore, the employees are not scheduled to be physically transferred to the Water & Sewer Department at this time. Mr. Spector asked if those salaries were paid out of the Water & Sewer budget. Mr. Haapala stated that was correct. Mr. Sher asked if those positions were included in the organizational chart. Mr. Haapala replied, "Yes" and indicated that those individuals currently reported to the Assistant Water & Sewer Director. Mr. Herbert asked if the Assistant Water & Sewer Director would be moved to Town Hall. Mr. Haapala replied, "No."

Re-Org proposal for Water and Sewer (Continued)

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Mr. Spector asked how the complaint phone calls are handled. Mr. Haapala stated those calls are transferred to either him or Dan Gebrowsky. Mr. Spector stated there were problems in the past with respect to the phone calls. Mr. Haapala stated that has been corrected.

Mr. Spector asked if this proposal was discussed with the Township Supervisor. Mr. Haapala replied, "Yes."

Mr. Herbert stated the total cost is approximately \$30,000 per year, including benefits. He stated that the Assistant Water & Sewer Director is close to retirement and there has been an ongoing problem with the Billing Department operations. Once the Assistant Water & Sewer Director retired, it appeared that it would be beneficial to advance a current staff member to handle the billing operations rather than continue with an Assistant Water & Sewer Director position. He added that would be a real cost effective solution. Mr. Haapala stated he was looking at having the Water & Sewer Billing Analyst go from level 4.5 to level 6 and eliminating the Assistant Water & Sewer Director position.

Mr. Haapala stated he had discussion with Ms. Henry regarding the individual with 24 years seniority. The concern was with that individual retaining his seniority and not losing his job by going to Code Enforcement Department in the event of a layoff.

Mr. Sher asked what would happen in the event of a retirement. Mr. Herbert stated that when reviewing the budgets, the Township Board may want to designate some positions that are not to be automatically filled due to a retirement.

Mr. Sher asked if Mr. Killian was in agreement with the proposal. Mr. Haapala replied, "Yes."

Mr. Haapala asked if a LOU was necessary. Mr. Herbert replied, "Yes." Ms. Henry asked if the elimination of the level 4 position at the end of 2008 would be through retirement, attrition or layoff. Mr. Herbert stated the Township was expecting some attrition, but there could also be layoffs at the end of 2008.

Motion by Mr. Sher and supported by Mr. Spector to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Water & Sewer Department reorganization as presented.

Ayes: Sher, Spector

Nays: None

Absent: Macon

Motion carried

Re-title Police Captain to Deputy Chief

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Chief Cronin stated his request simply involved changing the title of Police Captain to Deputy Police Chief and did not include any changes to the salary.

Mr. Herbert stated the request would establish the Deputy Chief acting in the capacity of Police Chief in the event the Police Chief could not serve in that capacity due to absence, illness, etc. The current policy involves the Township Supervisor appointing an individual to act in that capacity. He stated that the Township Supervisor concurred with the change.

Mr. Sher asked how this related to adjacent communities. Mr. Herbert stated this change would put the Township in line with other communities. He added that the Police Captain position would be eliminated and the Deputy Chief position would be created.

Motion by Mr. Sher and supported by Mr. Spector to recommend to the Township Board approval of the elimination of the Police Captain job description and creation of the Deputy Police Chief position and job description.

Ayes: Sher, Spector

Nays: None

Absent: Macon

Motion carried

Opinion concerning approval process for pay level changes

Mr. Herbert stated there was a question as to why the union would be required to approve a LOU for pay level changes. There is language in the contract which indicates that the Township cannot change wages simply by a vote of the Township Board. He presented a letter from the Township Labor Attorney addressing and confirming that issue.

Amendment to Employee Manual

Mr. Herbert stated it was not clear that the Travel Policy applies to all employees and hence, the reason he wanted to move it from Article 12 to Article S ~ Special Policies. In addition, the daily meal rates are out of date and therefore, it needs to be increased. He was recommending that it be increased to \$50 per day.

Mr. Herbert stated the other change is with respect to the Retiree Healthcare for those employees hired after 10/10/03. He recommended that the amount be changed from \$25 to \$30 per month per year of service based on the inflation rate over the past four years. He provided an example of an employee who had 20 years of service who would go from \$500 to \$600 per month as a result of the change.

Amendment to Employee Manual

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Mr. Spector asked what would happen once the employee reached Social Security level and became eligible for Medicare. Mr. Herbert stated that he could add language to address that issue by indicating that when the employee reached Medicare age, they only receive 2/3 of the amount. Mr. Spector questioned the 2/3 amount.

Mr. Sher asked if this was part of the union contract. Mr. Herbert replied, "No" and indicated that this was for the non-union employees.

Mr. Herbert suggested that the items be postponed so that he may provide more information to the Committee.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marya Duncan
HR Specialist

NOTE: Approved minutes of this meeting are maintained as part of the Public Record and are available upon request. A fee will be required for copies of all meeting tapes and/or approved minutes. Please contact the Recording Secretary of the Planning & Environment Department for information.